

# Fire of Youth — by Henry James Forman

Continued from Last Sunday

## CHAPTER XVIII. (Cont'd).

### Speculation.

THERE are two simultaneous tides to our lives, as no one can fail to perceive. There is the flashing surface current, brilliant and shimmering in the sunlight, full of sparkle and gaiety and happiness—flowing and playing and eagerly carrying us to the laughing blue waters of life.

But under and beneath this golden flood there is always the other, the undertow, gray, sinister, treacherous and full of dangers.

With unsuspected violence it seems to pluck at our limbs, our very souls, seizing upon us and whirling us mercilessly down to the dark, mether depths of failure and misery and hopeless despair.

Fortune or chance, some call it. But others declare that the will is the sovereign navigator. Have the will at the helm and your safety is assured. Anthony and Adela had the opportunity of judging that month of May, but the notation of philosophical data was at that time of only the remotest possible concern to them.

It was that period of excitement and confusion, of measures and precautions, of spy scares, preparations, organizations—the manner in which a great, unwarlike, democratic nation girds its loins for a vast warlike undertaking. One hundred millions was asked for the Red Cross and the request was met with a large over-subscription. Bridges and munitions plants were already being guarded. Washington was crying out for hotel space because everybody wanted to serve. The army was recruiting, the navy was recruiting. There was no draft law as yet, but many young men were offering their services and all trained men were going in or talking of going in.

The wisdom of General Wood in inaugurating the Plattsburg movement was now visible to all and Anthony was congratulating himself on having received the training. He talked of applying for a commission and Adela with dogged firmness approved of it—and secretly wept over it. There came home to her for the first time how little women's wishes counted in this man-made world.

Anthony talked vaguely of their marriage that Summer and far more definitely of his commission. She knew that, of course, he must go and yet was he eager to go away from her? What is this feeling of patriotism, of duty? Was it deeper than love? Or was his readiness to leave her due to an incomplete love, to bygone interests that made of her only a more substantial and prosaic incident in his life? It was a time as uneasy for young people as it was for the older.

Adela will always remember that Saturday afternoon, the nineteenth of May, when together with an instructor and some fellow students of both sexes of the League she was returning from a sketching expedition in Bronx Park. There were some six or seven young people in the group, aside from the instructor, Robert Oliver, a well-known landscape painter. Adela, with a portfolio under her arm, was walking beside Oliver and they were deep in a technical discussion. He was emphasizing his pet principle of intenseness and intensity of vision which alone can bring an atmosphere of originality to a picture and his painting.

Adela was leaning intently ahead of her, by way of experimenting on the principle, to see what atmosphere her gaze could summon forth from the landscape before her, when they passed a pathway leading off at right angles and deeply shaded. By a bench some thirty yards away was standing a compact perambulator with a baby in it and a young woman beside it. A man three-quarters turned away from the main path was facing and talking earnestly to the young woman. One of his hands was engaged by the babbling baby in the perambulator. With the other he was passing over to the girl a roll of film. Adela saw that clearly.

The man was Anthony. But what suddenly she knew not, Adela had suddenly turned from the contemplation of the landscape ahead of her and with a quick, almost uncanny, all-embracing glance stamped the picture upon her brain. Anthony was evidently on the point of going. (He was to meet her, Adela, in the studio at four o'clock.) Suddenly the young woman, with a furtive glance, bent toward Anthony and, almost reverently, kissed him on the cheek—and both of them laughed!

A tremor shot through Adela's body and a sudden weakness overtook her. A wave of darkness almost blotted out all that lay ahead. The uneasy feeling at her knees made her stumble.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and the exclamation was a sob.

Oliver caught her under the arm with a swift, searching glance.

"What's the matter—high heels?" he inquired.

"Yes—no!" stammered a deathly white Adela piteously, with quivering lips. "A pebble or something—I almost fell." There was a silence. A deep sigh escaped her and she began to talk rapidly and somewhat incoherently of Oliver's theory of vision in landscape painting.



"My dear," Adela murmured brokenly. "I'm so glad—I'm so sorry—oh, what a hard time you've had!—you must let me help you."

When Anthony entered the door of the "Rubens" that afternoon, Sol Kirk, the Jamaica negro doorman, elevator and telephone man rolled into one, informed him that he had a message for "any callers"; Miss Gray was out and would not be back that evening.

Myrtled and disappointed Anthony returned to his room. There his mystification was to a considerable degree dissolved. A note from Adela delivered by a messenger awaited him. It read:

"I know everything now—about the other woman. It was cruel and cowardly not to tell me and to have let me—(but the last five words were crossed out). Please never speak to me again or try to communicate with me. I never want to see you or hear from you again. I have had my lesson. A. G."

A sudden crushing sense like a blow on the chest seemed to strike all his body at once. A struggling, rushing sensation of numbness rose from his heart to his brain.

"All over!" he murmured to himself as with leaden feet he climbed the stairs.

"She has found out about Vilma. That's the end. Lord, Lord—why didn't I tell her first? But how could I tell—how could I? Wonder how she found out?"

The thought of Grace Thomas, of his meeting with her in the park that day by her own request, instead of at her flat, in order to deliver to her Joe Shelburn's quarterly remittance, did not even for one instant enter his head. It had happened too often. It was a matter of routine. She had foolishly kissed him in gratitude. But even that he had forgotten.

Crushed and broken he sat in his chair for he knew not how long, breathing heavily, his head sunk on his chest, a blackness as of night enveloping him. No more exquisite suffering could have been devised by any one desiring to punish him for a whole life of past misdeeds. The droning hum of the city was like the sound of many waters closing over his head.

"Finished—done—finished!" he repeated over and over in a stupor of dull pain.

"Thank God there's the war!" he added without voice in his words, only his lips moving. "Finished." He threw himself on his couch and lay still.

Some hours later he nevertheless collected himself and wrote the following words to Adela:

"Dear Adela:

"I only want to say this: Your note has about finished me. I always meant to tell you everything, but how could I? I had an instinctive knowledge you would feel that

way. Your very fineness and goodness are against me. I wish I had had the last five words crossed out. Please never speak to me again or try to communicate with me. I never want to see you or hear from you again. I have had my lesson. A. G."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

He hesitated for some time before despatching that note by messenger. The felicity he had been seeking was not for him. His destiny was by now his own. Men grow and change. I have changed a good deal since you have been here—but that won't interest you now. I would rather die than hurt you—but give me another chance—if you possibly can—that is all I ask."

tain her strength—that kept ebbing from her like water.

Clarice had been positively shocked when Adela, with blazing eyes and a staggering effort at self-control, begged her, if she loved her, not to mention the name of Anthony to her.

"Why, Adela Gray!" Clarice,

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"Not!" Douglas exclaimed with incredulity. "What a mess! When did it all come out? Tell me what's been and gone and happened!"

"Oh, it's terrible, Douglas. They've had a quarrel. I thought it was nothing at first—but now—oh, what

told me to keep it to myself. But it never entered my head that you and Adela didn't know. I thought, of course—oh, pshaw! what's the trouble?"

For the expressive features of Clarice were suddenly swept by a wave of tragic concern. For the first time he saw tears glistening in those normally calm eyes.

"My God—sister!" he murmured. "I hope—you're not in love with him, are you?"

"Oh, stupid men!" gasped Clarice, as though it were an invocation, ignoring the young man's question. "It will break her heart!"

"He is a dear boy," she reflected.

"Those two young dynamos," Douglas went on, "it isn't easy to put an ear into their affairs."

It was profoundly true, thought Clarice. What could one do? And she, who ordinarily had felt a kind of brisk superiority to this boy, three years younger than herself, now expressed a melancholy pleasure in having him there to talk to, to lean upon—a warm, substantial reality in the midst of a world of shadows and pain. Supposing he, too, should go away, into the gigantic maelstrom that was beginning to suck in the young man